

THE Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL
DEVOTED TO
ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM,
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."

No. 41.

MELBOURNE, JANUARY 1st, 1874.

PRICE SIXPENCE

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MANY an earnest Spiritualist views the future of this great movement with almost as much fear as hope, knowing that Spiritualism, like all other human things, is mixed—good and evil—according to the different individualities through whom it comes into existence. Perhaps of all these desponding ones none is more prominently before the public, and therefore none has a wider influence, than that bright western star, Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten. The very earnestness of her character, the very loftiness of her own aims and aspirations, tend to make anything or anybody less noble than herself a disappointment to her. Therefore, life becomes to her, and to others like her, full of disappointment. We take her, indeed, only as typical of a class of some of the best and worthiest souls among us. But we would remind all such that the cross they bear,—a heavy one, no doubt, and one not easily estimated by others of a more sanguine temperament,—has ever been the cross of the noblest reformers: to desire and to reach after a higher ideal than could be attained—not by themselves, for that is impossible, no man ever yet had an ideal higher than he *could* attain—but higher than could be attained by those they loved and sought to serve. Now to these souls, filled with a divine discontent with the actual, it seems to us that a word might be spoken, to show them that in the very imperfections and shortcomings which they deplore, is sometimes to be found our best protection from greater evils. Take, for instance, a point on which Mrs. Hardinge has already touched in some of her writings—a point, too, which is very frequently attacked by those who mistakenly suppose that they know something of Spiritualism. We refer to the blunders, mis-statements, and mistakes in matters of fact, that are not unfrequently sheeted home to the communications received through mediums. How

much ado our antagonists make over these occurrences how exultingly they announce them to the world with "See what fools these Spiritualists are!" How the love of many waxes cold, how the timid among us experience a very decided increase in their habitual disinclination to avow their belief, how even firm and fearless followers of truth wherever she leads deplore the error as a misfortune. But, it may be objected, truth never tells lies. No, certainly not; neither will she always tell just what you wish her to say.

Let us consider what would be the condition of Spiritualism if you could be sure of attaining truth, and nothing but truth, by sitting with any honest medium, and enquiring into any point of faith that might be puzzling you, or asking advice on any emergency that might be trying you. If you could thus secure infallible guidance, you would soon become a child in will and judgment and intelligence, while Spiritualism as a religion, instead of guiding man on to higher freedom of thought, would become the grossest superstition that ever yet degraded him. Every medium, however sincere and upright, would become the mouthpiece of any designing spirit that could attain control over him. That this is to some extent actually so, no one knows better than the experienced Spiritualist—the experienced medium. Many regret it; but it is in reality the only safeguard we can have against superstition. The more fully it is recognised that mistakes and mis-statements of the grossest character do occur, and may occur at any time or with any medium, the more readily shall we all learn to judge everything that comes from spirits, as we ought to judge everything that comes from any mortal man, by the test of our own reason—a fallible guide, it is true, but the only one it can be right for us to follow and obey,—the one only thing by the development and exercise of which man can advance either individually or as a race.

Of such a delusive character was the incident which lately gave some of our daily papers occasion to throw mud at Spiritualism, and at the belief of Spiritualists. How little did they understand either the one or the other! Mr. John Pagan, of Rochdale, England, was supposed to have communicated a series of not very logically stated religious views through a trance medium

of this city. Subsequent letters from England declare Mr. Pagan to be alive and well, very much disgusted at the liberties taken with his name. Spiritualism is henceforth supposed to be an exploded delusion. But to every intelligent Spiritualist the event comes as a confirmation of what most of us believe, and try to use as a guide of action, namely, to take whatever comes, whether from the dead or from the living, with no reverence for the value of the authority attached to the name that accompanies it, but only for the value of the truth and light that we can see in it. Mr. John Bright is a great and wise man and a liberal thinker, but shall we therefore all turn Quakers? And if John Bright, living, shall not guide us in anything blindly, why should John Pagan, dead or living, do so either?

We have alluded to this subject more circumstantially in another place, intending it in no unkindly spirit, meanwhile, the great facts of Spiritualism,—the fact of a sentient, intelligent existence, apart from this mortal body; the fact of the varieties of spirit character and opinion; the fact of their power to communicate with us through the medium of certain physical organizations, are as clearly proved by false messages as by true ones, and remain unimpugned and unassailable.

PLANCHETTE COMMUNICATION,

RECEIVED DECEMBER 1st, 1873.

MAY the Divine Spirit refresh your souls while expectantly you wait at the portals of his benign presence. Lift your heads and voices in praise and thanksgiving to him that sitteth upon the throne of everlasting righteousness whose love is from everlasting. The nature of man leads him to look beyond the precincts of earth for the fulfilment of his longings and aspirations. Sometimes overlooking the desirability of making heaven upon earth, for God is in *Heaven*, which is *Harmony*. Yea, he is everywhere, though the inharmonious soul does not perceive his beauty and love you cannot exclude his effulgent light which pierces the dark labyrinth of man's progressive nature, and which draws him heavenward, though the nightmare of ignorance and superstition hold him fast in the sleep of forgetfulness. Earth and its inhabitants have entered upon another cycle of development, which, like those that preceded it, will ultimate in a greater good. Those things which were necessary to the minds and physical conditions in the past, served the call for which they were evolved—the growth and development of the race, but are no longer needed by the advancing minds of the present. You are not to rest satisfied with the light you have, as the soul puts forth its aspirations, and the mind is quickened by knowledge, you become stronger, and abler to bear a purer and more effulgent light. The mind is illumined by its own light, the Divine blends with the Human, and is truly an incarnation of God.

IMPRESSIONAL WRITING,

RECEIVED 1st DECEMBER, 1873.

FRIENDS—We are much pleased with the conditions of your circle to-night—there is a peaceful calm, and a beautiful harmony that is always essential to the progress of any circle. We have frequently pointed out the absolute necessity of perfect harmony before the elements of progress can exist in any circle that sits for the highest phases of spirit intercourse—remember this in future.

How fallible and forgetful human nature is; we find that even in your experienced circle it is needful to remind you of things that again and again have been reiterated. The hill of progressive development is mounted very gradually even by the most energetic, it is sometimes necessary even to remind them that they

have not yet reached the summit, but have only made the second or third stage.

THE SONS OF MEN ARE BROTHERS ALL.

This is a subject we love to speak upon, its importance is ever before us in the grand fact—that once fully embraced it becomes the savior of the whole human family. It is impossible to depict the love and peace that the future brotherhood yet to be consummated on your earth will enjoy. There is nothing utopian, however, in the conception as some defamers of the race would have us believe, however distant that bright day may be, it does not stretch beyond the limits of what may be termed a rational conception.

One thing is certain—this portion of God's universe called earth cannot possibly be reformed and brought to a happy harmonious condition until the universal brotherhood of man is duly recognised—its principles and sentiments fully practised towards every member of the race. This simple fact lies at the foundation of all sound reform—of all charity and genuine benevolence. It is frequently called by another name, but it matters little what terms may be used to define it—wherever it exists it will prove its virtue and excellence by the effects produced. Can you at the present moment point out any portion of your community where it is making itself manifest? We think not. We can, however, detect here and there throughout the ranks of social life the bright nucleus of this *warm sentiment*—we can discern how its emanations soften and heal many of the surrounding aches and pains of brother man—we can see how frequently it awakens a response in hearts that have proved invulnerable to every other influence.

My friends, the Great God of the universe, whose name is *Love*, has appointed this, the most potent power, whereby may be effected the redemption from all evil of every son and daughter of the race that walks the wide world, it is indeed the infallible remedy for all the ills that flesh is heir to. Were it not for the exercise of this brotherly sentiment we might for ever despair of lifting even one unfortunate brother out of the dark depths of desponding misery. But we are not left in doubt on such a matter; why should we? Do you think the Great and Good Father would leave His children in doubt about the best method whereby His erring sons may be gathered into the happy circle of peace and love, where they may enjoy the fullness of His smile and blessing. No, we say such a thing is impossible, the words are written in letters of indescribable beauty, open to the gaze of every inhabitant of the spheres—*Brotherly Love is omnipotent to rescue from the most degraded depths every son of God*. Our labor of love is for the suffering here as well as for those on your earth, and we again repeat that we can do absolutely nothing towards recovering any one from moral sickness to spiritual health unless we go with the tenderest brotherly sentiment in our hearts, and expressed in the persistent desire to do good, no matter how often repelled or ignored, we work from the pure desire of doing good.

Now, friends, we wish to point out to you all how superficial and unreal man's love to his brother generally is. Do you not frequently turn away and refuse to administer relief were the slightest manifestation of ingratitude may occur? If such be the case your brotherly love is worth very little, and unworthy the name of the Universal Father whose sons you are. His love flows out free, unrestrained, and unrestricted, to every living thing in His unbounded creation, the wants of the needy are supplied by that *Love* that thinketh no evil. Now it is our earnest desire to see a little more of this Divine principle working in the heart of your community. *Hate and jealousy* are the two most prominent features in modern society at the present time, and it should be the object of every true man to remove from the human family such hateful propensities.

And, first of all, let every one work towards this end by doing all in his power to render men tolerant; when this happy feeling is attained the work is half performed. But at the present time they will not do this. All the different petty sects stand aloof from each other and are far from looking upon one another as brothers or members of the same family they rather do all in their power to crush and put to flight their so-called antagon-

-ists and enemies. Surely those who think and act so, are far from being of sound mind and good heart. They cannot possibly be truly "born of the spirit," they are rather in the darkness of uncharitable superstition—dark ignorance clouds their understanding and benumbs the finer feelings of their nature—they have yet to learn the first lesson that God teaches all his children before they can make any spiritual progress; they are not even "babes in Christ," and do not comprehend the first letter in the spiritual alphabet.

Cast out from your midst the semblance of such a spirit. Recognise every man irrespective of rank and station as a brother, and do him a brotherly turn if within your power; and if you can do nothing more smile kindly upon him, it may do more good than twenty shillings worth of respectable charity. The latter may be a counterfeit of the real article—not but that such may sometimes accompany the true sentiment of brotherly love, but unfortunately it is generally accepted as the best indicator of respectable Christianity, and on this account does much harm both to the giver and the object for which it is given. It is a great pity that a man is allowed to think that virtue and spiritual excellence can be purchased with silver and gold, and yet it is so. In the present condition of society no man with money, making apparent professions of goodness will be refused admittance into the bosom of the Church, every scruple is then laid aside but due care must be observed in the examination of a poor and lowly candidate. Away with such mockery; surely enough light has come into the world to utterly sweep such shams from off the face of the earth.

Friends, *be nothing more than nature has made you*—good or bad hide not your true character—*put no shams on*, they will injure you more than you are aware of. If men had any idea of how degrading a thing dishonesty is they would not continue to make the world believe they are better than they really are. *Despise any approach to a religious cloak—live the life of a free-born, liberal son of your Father who is in heaven*, to whose all-searching eye every thought and every deed is laid bare.

Poetry.

I MAY NOT BE A POET.

I may not be a poet: but my heart beats to the tune.
The mocking-birds are warbling in this merry month
of June;

My soul joins in the chorus as they swell their artless lay;
I sit and dream of heaven on this sunny, summer-day.

I may not be a poet; but I often stand and gaze,
With joy-tears in my eyes, upon the sun's departing
rays,

When golden beams are streaming through the cloud-
lets in the west,

And Sol gives each a glory-kiss before he goes to rest.

I may not be a poet: but I love the forest-tree;
Each wood-king is a brother, happy, natural, and free.
I worship as a Druid; for God dwells within this place:
In wandering through the forest, I behold him face to
face.

I may not be a poet: but I love night's starry eyes;
Their glory, like a magnet, draws my spirit to the skies
I march along the milky way, amid the shining throng,
And list with rapture, as I go, to their melodious song.

I may not be a poet: but the flowers talk to me;
The leaflets whisper softly as I sit beneath the tree.
To me the crickets chirp their loves, no secrets from me
hid:

I lie upon the velvet sward, and learn what "Katy did."

I may not be a poet; but I love the true and right,
And welcome freedom's dawning, as the eagle greets
the light.

Roll on, bright orb of Liberty; and, in thy ardent ray,
May every fetter mankind wears melt speedily away!

W. Denton.

To Correspondents.

*Communications for insertion in this Journal should be
plainly written, and as concise as possible.*

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS AT SANDHURST.

DEAR HARBINGER,—My previous letter from the Energetic Circle to you was dated the 19th August last. I resume my narrative of some of the principal manifestations which have taken place since then. The spirits John and Katie King with others, still control our mediums, and although we have not as yet been able to see their materialized forms, we feel their hands, arms, and faces, and have no doubt but that in the course of a little time we shall also see them. Katie King—per her medium—has been giving some wonderful tests of her presence, by relating privately in the ears of some of the members of the circle, things which have happened to their families, perfectly unknown to the medium or to anyone present except the persons to whom these mysterious communications were made, things too which were not in their minds, and often of a rather startling character. The members have felt her spirit-arm and hand, with a ring on the fourth finger, and both males and females have had locks of her beautiful golden hair given to them. John King—per the male medium—has repeatedly allowed all the members to feel his arm, from the shoulder to the tips of the fingers. It is a very muscular arm, with a double row of beads on the wrist, and a diamond ring on the small finger. The beads have been made to touch our heads, faces, and hands, before the arm came, and, to the touch, they feel just like any other beads, and make the same noise. One evening the male medium was made to go to the far end of the circle while entranced, and whilst standing in front of Mr. S., the latter felt a large arm suddenly encircle both the medium and himself, and as quick as lightning bear them along the table horizontally to beside the chairman. So cleverly and silently was this done that the persons sitting on each side of Mr. S. were not aware of his absence from his chair until his voice was heard speaking to the chairman, who was startled and amazed at his being in such a position. Mr. S. says he and the medium were lifted up like a feather. Katie King said that it was her father's arm that did it. Katie the same night returned a lady a photograph of her brother, which she had taken from her at a previous sitting. It was restored uninjured, although the spirit had had it away for a week. The male medium was supposed to have been levitated in the air at this sitting, his feet having touched the heads of several of the sitters, but of this—sitting as we were in the dark—we had no proof. On one of the numbered papers on the table was found the following direct spirit-writing:—"Remember always to have forethought. Judge everything, and consider before passing an opinion on the subject.—G. A."

At a sitting on the 31st August Alfred Longmore controlled the medium, and wrote through him as follows:—"The Dr. has failed partly in the object. You shall hear direct from me with my own papers when you are in harmony. They will come." At a sitting on the 5th September the same spirit wrote: "I meant what I said; I never have two opinions. In reply to further questions he said, "Not foolish papers, but those of my birth, death, &c." The spirit A.L. further said that we should hear from Dr. Richardson shortly, who had already written to us, "his letter was a month on the water," and that we should "hear of something which would probably astonish us." All this about the letter and its contents came true. At the seance on the 26th September, I read a letter which I had received from Dr. Richardson that mail. Referring to his search after Alfred Longmore he says: "I spent a whole afternoon endeavoring to find out for your circle the reality of Alfred Longmore. I regret to say I did not succeed. The Swan, Fulham, was burned down last October year, and no one knew anything of A.L. I saw the churchwarden, the clerk. I called on the vicar-general, who had been there 40 years. I left my address, and said that I had information for his relatives, if any could be

found. I saw the ruins at the river side. I have heard nothing yet. If I do, I will write again." The circle, I am happy to say, were not in the least cast down on the receipt of this letter, their minds having been prepared for it a month previously. Should A.L. now bring his own papers, it will be a far better test than the other one would have been, because had the Dr. found out his whereabouts as stated by himself, our opponents would at once have said, "Oh, someone in the circle must have known all about him previously." Now, however, they cannot say this. When A.L. first controlled the medium some 12 months ago, he then said it might be two years before we would be able to prove his statements. At the sitting of the 6th September, a strange spirit named John Robinson controlled the male medium. He wrote in an old cramped hand as follows, and direct, that is, without the medium:—"I am a powerful spirit. Born in Halifax 1600, died in Leeds in the year 1693. Be in good harmony. I have come for much. Excuse my writing. I never wrote before coming to the different circles.—John Robinson." John King said that Robinson was more powerful than him. The chairman at this sitting had his hand placed upon a face, the features of which were sharp; chin covered with hair. The face seemed that of a very old man. At the next sitting every member of the circle was touched by spirit-hands before the mediums had moved away from their seats. On lighting up, a paper was found in the minute book on the chairman's desk, stating that before the circle should read that writing everyone of them would have been touched by spirit hands. The controlling spirit said it was John Robinson and George Abell who had so gratified them all. Beautiful spirit-lights were seen to-night. John Robinson wrote: "Remember when the lights come near the floor you will see the forms the sooner. That on the table to-night was the first step towards materialization." At the next sitting all joined hands before the light was put out, to obtain a conclusive test of the fact of spirit-hands being actually amongst us. Immediately the light was blown out, the chairman reported that he was conscious of some one being close to him, and, at the same time, a face came up to his forehead, and lips which felt the same as human lips, kissed it. The candlestick was raised up on the table and rapped loudly three times in corroboration of what the chairman had stated, the candle being pulled out of the socket and thrown upon the floor. All hands reported as still joined, including those of the mediums. The lady medium, who is clairvoyant, and sees the spirits in her normal state, informed the circle that during the foregoing manifestations she saw spirit-hands at the numbered papers on the table, one of the papers being taken up and writing commenced on another. On lighting up this was proved correct to the letter. There were two papers written upon, and this was what was on them: "You can tie the medium and seal with wax next Friday. Then I shall write as usual.—John Robinson." At the next Friday's sitting (circle meet every Friday and Sunday evenings) this was done as requested. The medium was bound at the wrists with red tape and the knot sealed with wax. The papers were all numbered and carefully examined, all hands joined, including those of the lady medium, the mediums having previously been searched so that no pencil might be about them, and then the light put out. The room was not very dark, and the male medium was seen to rise in his seat, and gently place his mouth on the joined hands of the chairman and vice-chairman. During the singing of the chant, "Shall we gather at the river," a sound of writing was distinctly heard. Raps came for light, the medium being found sitting as described, still bound, the seal unbroken, and perfectly unconscious. On examining the papers on the table, two of them, to our surprise and joy, were written upon. On one there was the respective signatures, George Abell and Alfred Longmore, and on the other that of John Robinson. Will your discerning readers ask themselves who it was that wrote these names if it was not spirits? Our circle are all pledged in the sight of God not to knowingly deceive themselves or others as to the manifestations occurring, and have no motive for sitting either to deceive themselves or others. From whence, then, came

these extraordinary manifestations? Who wrote on these numbered papers without a pencil? Whose hands were they that the lady medium saw on the table, and from what quarter comes the mechanical power and intelligence guiding it which enable these hands to do such things? I leave your readers to judge for themselves. Later on, the same evening, John King showed his light, which was shaped somewhat like an egg, was luminous, and burned for several minutes. It being waved above and around the medium while the circle were singing, "Guide me, oh thou great Jehovah." The light was as usual covered with gauze, and apparently held by a spirit-hand. Katie King—per her medium—explained to the circle that the reason why her "father's medium leant with his mouth on the hands of the two chairmen was, in consequence of one of the circle thinking (mentally) that he might write with his mouth. John King said, "Let him try to write so with his mouth." One of the gentlemen present confessed that he had thought so, and was very much astonished at his thought being instantly made known to the spirits. At this seance a letter was read from Mr. Terry, of Melbourne, acknowledging the receipt of a lock of Katie King's hair and her handwriting. The foregoing are the principal manifestations which occurred at our circle from the 19th August till the 5th October.

At the seances held on the 5th and 10th October some interesting phenomena occurred. At the former several members felt what they supposed was a spirit-face, the entranced medium being made to place their hands first on the medium's own face and immediately on that of another. The one face would be cold and the other warm, and having more hair on it than on that of the medium. The spirit-face so far has only been felt close to that of the medium. It is evident that the control has not yet the power to go further. And sometimes only a portion of a face has been felt, such as the upper portion, the nose and lips. At the latter seance while the hands of all were joined, both the chairmen were touched on the legs by some hard substance, and a large quantity of gauze was drawn across the chairman's face. A lady clairvoyant reported seeing the spirit manifesting. Whilst the circle were singing, heavy footsteps were heard moving along the room. During this strange noise, the medium's head was pressed down upon the chairman's arm by an invisible agent. John King showed his light at this seance, and Katie's arm and hand, with a ring on the small finger, as was also her father's, was felt by several of the members. A loud crash was heard on the table, one of the clairvoyants reporting at the same moment seeing a number of spirit-hands and arms on the table. The sound resembled that made by the discharge of an electric battery. The chairman reported that he had received a gentle slap on the left cheek, and felt like a very large limb pressed against his. The vice-chairman was impressed with the idea that a child was sitting close to him, and was touched gently on the legs by something which he could not describe. The chairman then reported being touched on the back of the head, on the back, and on the mouth and forehead, by a very large spirit-hand. Two lady clairvoyants described seeing these hands in the act of touching the chairman and their forms near him to those sitting next them in a whisper, before the chairman spoke. The hands of all in the circle were still joined. So deep an impression had this extraordinary manifestation made on the minds of all present, that the spirits were specially thanked for it. At this seance a clammy face was felt close to the medium, which Katie said was John Robinson's, and her father shewed his light, which was larger than usual, very vivid and beautiful. One member reported seeing a white, cloudy figure close to it. Later on, our old friend the Red Indian chief, manifested, and proceeded to scalp in pantomime, several of the members. One member reported feeling a face covered with gauze, and another felt John King's arm, bare from the armpit, and a ring on the fourth finger. At the seance on the 19th October the following papers were found on the table and written upon in the respective handwritings of the spirits named: "Be of good cheer, and understand all the things if possible.—G. A." "Be of good cheer. I am

doing much.—John Robinson." "Alfred Longmore is doing much for all of you. We are all present." Spirit hands and faces were felt at this seance, and Katie King gave the chairman, per her medium, a small lady's stud which she had lost several weeks previously, and which proved (as the lady medium afterwards told the circle) to be a memento of a deceased friend. The medium, on being awake and made aware of this stud being returned to her, showed every sign of joy at its recovery. On the 24th October, the vice-chairman was told to note the number of one of the slips on the table (No. 60), and to put his hand upon it and hold it tight. This he did, and the light was blown out. Despite his precautions he felt the paper whisked away while each chairman held the medium's hands, and on lighting up the medium made signs to look in the minute book on the desk. The missing paper was found within the lids, on which was written as follows:—"The weather is very much against us to-night, and you all, but one, are weary. Therefore, you cannot have what you ought to have. Keep on. You are on a good road.—G.A." This direct spirit-writing was done with marvellous rapidity. The remark about the circle all being weary save one was correct, as we had all been at "the Evening at Home" on the previous night, except one. King showed his light at this seance, and one of the gentlemen present had his nose pulled by a spirit-hand. King's muscular arm was felt by several, and the spirit "Peter" who accompanies King at the English circles, announced his presence for the first time. He shook hands with the chairman, and said "the Boss is gone." He spoke in a squeaking sort of voice—per the medium—and was rather jocular in his remarks. He said at one time of his earth-life he had been a barber, and proceeded to experiment upon one or two of the sitters, much to their amusement. Katie King, who had remained silent for a little time, told me she had been away with Mr. Terry. At the seance on the 26th, whilst all hands were joined, the table (a large one) was made to rise and fall with a crashing sound, no one present touching it at the time. King caused his beads to pass over the heads of some of the members. He also allowed the chairman to feel a turban, head, and the upper portion of a face. King said that ere long he should feel not only his head, hand and face, but his whole form, and not be afraid of him. Katie then stated that she would give the chairman something he had lost on the 23rd inst., but which she had taken. She requested him to hold up both hands open, into which she dropped a pencil. This pencil, along with some papers, I had laid on the table in my office on the afternoon of the 23rd previous to going home to dress for The Evening at Home, locking up my office at the same time. On returning, I found the papers as I left them, but the pencil gone. You can judge of my astonishment on receiving it back in the manner related. These, I may add, are the plain, simple facts of the matter. Your readers are at liberty to believe them or not, as they choose. I give you my word of honor that I have strictly confined myself to the truth. Now, who came into my locked up office, took away the pencil, kept it for several days, and restored it again to me? There was an agent possessing intelligence and power, and apparently independent of the mediums in the first instance. Who and what was this agent? Who brought the pencil, put it into the hands of an unconscious human being several days after it was taken away, and made her (acting under its control) restore it to its owner? The agent declared itself to be the disembodied spirit of one who had lived on earth. Are we justified in believing it or not? are questions which I leave your readers to answer, as they have a mind to answer them. At the same seance Katie King drew the hand of one of the sitters across a paper and gave it to him folded up. On lighting up it was found to contain a lock of her hair, and on the paper was written: "For my medium.—K.K." At the previous seance one of the gentlemen received from Katie a lock of dark hair purporting to be from an old lady friend of his for several years a spirit. The control also gave him her christian and surname, although none but himself and another present knew anything of her. The medium knew nothing whatever of her. The chairman reported that several

times the medium, whilst controlled, had held something like a box up to his nose from which he smelt the most delicious perfume. The spirit replied—per the male medium—"From John Robinson." At the seance on the 31st October, the lady medium reported seeing in her normal state a spirit-hand on the table striving to lift the candlestick, which it succeeded in doing, and then throwing it down on the floor, all hands being joined at the time. In reply to the chairman; John King said: "Spirits after the death of the body cannot immediately come back again unless under powerful influence, or by their being highly mediumistic." On 2nd November, four of the members felt John King's beads, and his bare arm with a double row of beads on the wrist. During this seance the medium's touch was accompanied with the most delicious perfume. Katie King said that when her father showed himself they would all feel it much stronger. Light was here struck, and to the astonishment of all a red cross was seen painted on the forehead of the male medium. On rubbing it with a handkerchief, it was found stained as if with blood. This singular phenomenon has not since been repeated. The chairman explained to the circle that the same sign was frequently made in churches and tombs where papers had been placed to receive direct spirit-writing. At the next seance on the 7th November, a portion of the circle were seized with laughter, one of the mediums being controlled in that state. A light spirit controlled and slapped several of the members in the face and about the head, and when she was gone the usual spirits took the control and administered a severe rebuke to all present for their levity, stating they, the spirits, had lost power equal to two sittings in consequence of their conduct. The circle never had acted so previously, and the laughter on that occasion could not well be accounted for. It, however, was productive of good, as the greatest decorum has been observed by all since. During the control of the light spirit, the chairman felt a very bad smell as of the grave. On the 9th the circle again met, and the spirit announced, per George Abell: "We are all with you." In the light, the vice-chairman's hand was placed on one of the numbered papers, and in a moment the light was put out and again called for. The spirit said: "Look in the desk." I rose, took the key out of my pocket, and unlocked my desk, and there sure enough was the paper, on which was written: "I am great, understand.—John Robinson." The paper was numbered 85, but unfortunately was not taken down previous to the vice-chairman's hand being placed upon it, and so the test, on second thought, was not considered complete, as we all found on trial that a slip could have been placed in the desk between the lid and the frame, and that it was just possible the spirits had made the unconscious mediums do this. There was no proof either way. King showed his light at this seance. It was noticed at the close that six of the numbered papers had been taken, all the members feeling for them in their pockets, but in vain; they could not be found. On the circle breaking up for the evening, one gentleman found one of the papers in the lining of his hat in the outer apartment, neatly folded and direct spirit-writing on it. Five others found the same, and nearly all in different hand writings. This was regarded as a very clever manifestation whether it had been done per the mediums or without them; it had been done in absolute silence. At the seance held on the 14th. November, an extract was read from the minutes of the National Conference of Spiritualists in England, anent spirit-writing. A spirit message containing 556 words was read, which had been received in five seconds of time. Hands and faces were felt at this seance. King's heavy footsteps were heard in the room, and at the same moment the Chairman reported feeling a hand touch his forehead and play with his hair. He also said that the male medium had passed him to his seat, but this was proved to be a mistake, as the Vice-Chairman and another reported that the medium was beside them and had been for sometime. One other gentleman said he thought it was the medium also. The other medium at the time was on the far side of the circle. Katie King called out that it was her father's form that had passed before

them. John King said to the Chairman "sometimes when in power and the harmony is good, we can leave the side of the medium as I did to-night. It was my form you felt." On the 16th, the lady Clairvoyants in their normal state saw the spirits including their features, quite plainly. Hands came from under the medium's chair and grasped the chairman by the legs, arms, and hands. They seemed to dart out with extraordinary rapidity. The male medium's chair whilst he was away from it and held by two of the sitters, was taken and thrown upon the table and then violently thrown on the floor. On the Chairman putting forth his hand to feel it, a hand came and grasped him by the arm. The Chairman was fully sensible of a presence close to him all through this manifestation, although neither of the mediums were near. King replied that he had been able to partly materialise himself in consequence of their good harmony. When he was able to get as far from the medium as the opposite side of the circle, they would all see him. On the 21st one of the Clairvoyants saw a long bare arm a little behind the medium, saw him take the two chairmen's hands and place them upon it, saw spirit-forms near to him and himself surrounded with a halo of light. She described all this in a whisper to the person sitting next her before any of it was reported to the circle. The two chairmen reported feeling the arm just as she had seen it. She also saw the male medium place himself upon the Vice-Chairman's knee, catch hold of one of his hands with both his, place his legs across the table with the Vice-Chairman's remaining hand across them. Then remain perfectly still. Then the chair upon which the medium sat was seized by spirit hands, dragged along to the table and levitated on to it. These hands she saw press upon the chair until it was broken in two pieces and then throw it on the floor. All this was done with considerable noise. The Chairman stooped down to pick up the chair when hands commenced pulling it from him, and a voice said—per the medium—"Let the chair alone." All this time the medium had never stirred. The legs and arms of the chair had all been pulled out of their sockets, but otherwise the chair was uninjured. Whilst the circle were singing, a frightful scream was heard. It was "Peter" who thus announced his presence. He cracked some jokes with the circle and then left, speaking all the time in a shrill voice. The male medium was controlled by a strange spirit, who asked if any present knew anyone by the name of "Oddell," adding "Lizzie Oddell." Two gentlemen said they did, but neither mediums nor any one else in the circle had any knowledge of such a person. The two friends, it seems, knew such a lady several years ago. The brother has been long dead and had passed altogether from their recollection. Whether it was he inquiring after his sister, or if she is now with him, they have no knowledge; but you can picture their astonishment at the question. At the seance on the 23rd November, the Chairman addressed the circle and urged upon them to trust and love the Spirits as though they were present in the body. All hands were joined at the time (nineteen persons being present), but raps loud and repeated were heard on the table in response, and the table itself oscillated backwards and forwards as though swayed by human hands. The medium was then controlled, and whilst held by the Vice-Chairman with all his strength, spirit-hands were seen to seize him by the ankles and to pull him with steady force towards the direction of the door. It took two men to hold him eventually.

The direct spirit voice was heard, it was supposed, at this circle. The Chairman asked one of the members if he said "something brought," this member being at the far end of the circle. He replied that he had not spoken, both mediums who were standing near him laughing at the remark. Katie and Peter—per the mediums—came round to the Chairman, and Katie said "you heard a voice which you supposed was A's say 'something brought';" it was George Abell who spoke, and he is by your chair now. He said, "something broke." This was an ear-ring belonging to the lady medium. I was perfectly certain that a third figure accompanied the two mediums when they came near my

chair. At this seance too the spirits Longmore, Abell and Robinson gave the circle a severe lecture for interfering with the writing phenomena, and casting a doubt upon their integrity in the matter. This was in reference to the writing which they had placed in my desk. No writing has been given since. But in the circle expressing its regret for what they had done, George Abell said the manifestations might come back again. It was not till the 14th December that we had any writing from the spirits again, when the above named three wrote in their respective hands. We have also all heard a voice singing whilst the entranced medium was trying to sing, and the other not entranced singing with us. This voice—a fine treble—sang so sweetly and kept such excellent time, that we all thought until the end of the hymn, it was a young lady's who had recently joined our circle. On asking the question, however, I found that the lady in question was not a singer and had not been singing. Katie King said it was the spirit sister of Mrs. M. whom we had heard, she having been a fine singer, like her sister, when on earth. The chairman reminded the circle at this seance that they had now been sitting twenty-three months. A. Longmore replied through the medium that this was so nominally, but they need not count it in reality more than eleven months, as they from one cause or other had only been making progress during the lesser period. And this is really the case. How wise and just our spirit-guides are in all they say. On the 28th November, several members were touched by spirit hands, and again they were made conscious of a materialized spirit-form being in their midst, although not yet visible to the naked eye. The clairvoyants, however, could see them quite plainly including their features. Heavy footsteps, as of a powerful, heavy man, walking about the room, were distinctly heard. Katie said, "It will not be long before you see them now." 30th November.—The manifestations very similar to the last. One gentleman and the chairman reported feeling a figure sitting between them whilst both mediums were away at other parts of the circle. This is a fact. It was only for a moment or two, but short as was the time, they were both made conscious of its presence there. On the 6th December, the circle on meeting were surprised and grieved to learn of the decease of Mrs. Richards (the mother of the circle from its beginning). The dear old lady had only been ill for a few days, and the members generally were not aware of her departure for spirit-land until they met. Her chair was kept vacant and hung with white ribbons as a small mark of respect to her memory. The whole circle felt the loss very much, our sister having been a most regular attendant at all the sittings. The spirits merely controlled the male medium, and then stated there would be no manifestations that night. But the two lady clairvoyants saw seated in Mrs. Richards' chair a figure draped in white, but could not see the features. Our departed sister died of inflammation of the bowels. Her sufferings were severe, but borne with great fortitude. She died true to her new faith, and expressed her "dying wish" to be buried according to the Spiritualistic forms. But her Wesleyan relatives refused to allow this, and buried her with the rites of their own church. The Spiritualists felt sorry, but beyond expressing their opinion did not interfere, knowing that it was of no consequence whatever. Five of the lady members of the circle went to her residence after leaving the seance on this evening to see their dear old sister's remains, but, I am sorry to add, were cruelly denied admittance. They came away rejoicing that their own minds were for ever free from sectarian creeds which could act upon their votaries in such a heathenish manner. At the funeral two Spiritualists ladies threw a few flowers on the coffin. They were comforted with the words of one of old "She is not here, but is risen." It is due to the Wesleyan neighbors of the departed lady to say, that they exhibited the utmost attention and kindness to her throughout her illness, thus shewing that human nature is always better than its creeds. Strange, our circle have not had any manifestations of special importance since sister Richards' death. Only, on last Sunday evening the 14th inst., after the circle had left a rather interesting

one occurred in the passage. Five of the gentlemen including the medium, were proceeding along it towards the door, when one of their number who had put his pipe in his mouth and was preparing some tobacco in his hand to fill it with, suddenly exclaimed that one of them had taken his pipe out of his mouth, and begged him to return it. One and all, however, denied the soft impeachment, and were not even aware that he had had a pipe in his mouth. The result was that all were placed on their honor, but no one had touched it. There could be then but one conclusion, the spirits had done it. So at least was the impression of all, and thus the matter rests at present. If they should return it in the circle as they returned my pencil, it will be another interesting item in the chain of evidence in their favor. The pipe (don't look at the article but at the fact) could not fly away of itself. It required some one to pull it out of its owner's mouth. Was it an intelligent entity or not? is a question which with all thinking persons can be easily answered.

18th December, 1873.

At the seances held on the 19th and 21st December, some very interesting phenomena occurred. The spirit John Robinson shewed his light, and the chairman reported that just before it went out, he was impressed with the idea that he saw the features of a man in it. Two of the members were touched by a very small, spirit hand. While the medium was held by his hands and legs, his chair was pulled in pieces and levitated on to the table. Two of the legs, at the same time, being silently placed on the knees of Mr. and Mrs. M., who were seated at the far end of the circle. Robinson informed us that it was he, assisted by John King, who took the pipe from P's mouth, and that it would be returned on Sunday. Last evening, accordingly, it was returned. Whilst the circle were singing, it was laid on the table in front of its owner, the hands of the medium being held at the time. All the gentlemen who were in company with Mr. P. when his pipe was taken out of his mouth on the previous Sunday, are ready to take their oath that they had no hand whatever in its abstraction. This is a test of spirit-power which those who differ from us will find it hard to get over. They may attempt to laugh it down, but, like the widow's cruse of oil, it will never grow less. Who took it out of the mouth of its owner, kept it away for eight days, and then returned it to him? No human hand did it. What intelligent power if not spirits, did it then? The power that did it told us they were spirits who had once lived in the flesh. Does the evidence warrant us in believing them? Last evening too, just after prayer and while the circle were singing, the chairman observed a phantom figure overshadow the entranced medium. The room not then being quite dark, like a darkness surrounded him, and then appeared the figure, a head and neck taller than the medium, who still remained seated in his chair. The chairman whispered to a gentleman seated next him, who, to his joy, also saw it, and was silently observing it when addressed. At the close of the singing, two others announced at the far end of the circle, that they had seen it also. No features were seen. It appeared to be as it were muffled up in a dark cloak. It was the spirit of John Robinson then controlling the medium. Later on, ten of the members smelt the most delicious perfume; also several of them felt a small spirit hand with a ring on, the little finger. Shortly after singing the evening hymn, the circle adjourned for the holidays. Before, however, departing the following resolution was unanimously carried:—"That in the opinion of this circle the time has arrived for the formation of a Progressive Spiritualist Association for Sandhurst, and that steps should be taken early in the new year to give effect to this resolution."

22nd December, 1873.

THE CHAIRMAN.

The "Medium" of October 10th, contains an excellent portrait of Gerald Massey the poet, accompanied by a Biography and specimens of his poetry. Mr. Massey is on a lecturing tour in America, where it was expected he would create somewhat of a sensation, he is an earnest Spiritualist of some years standing, and recently wrote a book "Concerning Spiritualism" which was well received by both Spiritualists and the general public, and had a deservedly large sale.

A LETTER FROM LONDON.

DEAR HARBINGER.—The principal matters of interest which have attracted attention during the last few weeks are, 1st, the inspirational orations of Mrs. Tappan. For the last four Sunday evenings, the Royal Music Hall, Holborn, has been filled by appreciative crowds, who have flocked to judge for themselves as to the value of direct spirit teachings. The discourses are indeed of a very high order, and the fact of a woman delivering such as are heard from no pulpit in the land, must be to those who do not accept the source, matter for deep thought. The daily papers have given notice of the meetings, and the *Daily News*, *The Standard*, *The Morning Post*, *The Hour*, *The Christian World*, have admitted her eloquence, poetry of language, and felicity of delivery, defining it as "an eloquent pleading for mind as against matter, and for immortality as against annihilation." Mr. Peebles and Dr. Dunn passed through London on their way home last week. They gave a stirring account of their travels; and the vulgarity and ignorance of a mercenary colonial press was counterbalanced by the greetings of such noble souls as Chunder Sen, Peary Chaud Mittra, and Victor Hugo.

I had the pleasure of meeting M. Alexandre, Aksakof of St. Petersburg. He is a Minister of State of the Court of Russia, and an ardent Spiritualist. He has translated into German the Divine Revelations and other works on Spiritualism and Spiritism. He is now engaged in collecting facts relative to the movement for a volume of his own.

The Rev. Dr. Monck, LL.D., F.A.S., &c., has delivered two lectures in Bristol, the scene of his former pastorate. They were well attended, the first being heard by some 800 persons, and were reported at length in all the dailies. He detailed some of his own extraordinary personal experiences, of his earnest wrestling by prayer against the phenomena, and of his ultimate conviction of their beneficial influence being forced upon him. Some of his former flock were present and exhibited the usual orthodox love and charity, by vindictive denunciations and imprecations! One man was distinctly overheard to threaten his life, and others were to blockade the doors on the occasion of the second lecture. The committee, however, arranged for a good posse of policemen who were in attendance, and the Bristol mob were happily prevented from further disgracing themselves. In all my 20 years' experience of the colonies I never witnessed so great a need of the humanising influences of holy Spiritualism. At the conclusion of the lecture there were hundreds of earnest, anxious inquirers thirsting for tidings of heaven and the angels, who came forward to examine the spirit writings and drawings. There was exhibited a direct spirit production consisting of 736 separate words written in pencil in seven seconds.

Your correspondent occupied the chair the first evening, and with a Russian Minister of State on one side and a former pupil of Spurgeon (expelled from orthodox pulpits for preaching truth) on the other. The jeers of the ignorant missed their mark. Mr. John Beattie, a citizen of Bristol, presided on the second evening. This gentleman has been experimenting on spirit photography with most interesting results. His pictures are another scientific demonstration of a force capable of acting independently of the will power of the circle. I hope to be able to procure copies for Australia. At his house there met casually on my visit a Russian, a Frenchman, a German, an Australian, and Mr. Beattie, a Briton.

W. L. R.

Clifton, October, 1873.

MESSAGES BY THE ALPHABET.

EDITOR HARBINGER, MELBOURNE.

SIR,—Calling the alphabet *viva voce* for every letter of every word "a most troublesome process" I think is quite unnecessary even in those cases where the influence is indicated by raps on the table. If the unseen agency is satisfied to point out the letters upon

a printed Alphabet by any light object held in the Medium's hand, it is reasonable to think, that it would rap as well at the proper letters constituting a message were the Medium to run over the letters with the same pointer. I have not however had the privilege of testing this latter method, and should be glad if some of your readers would, and report upon it. I see no reason why it should not do, it would save much labour and uncertainty, and ensure longer communications.

With regard to the divining-rod, the best thing to use is a common walking stick firmly held within the hands of two persons, one being a Medium. It should be held firmly because if a bad influence comes, it will sometimes strike right and left and play mischief.

I am,

Dunedin, N. Z.

A. T. Z.

AN ESSAY ON LIFE, ITS ORIGIN AND OBJECTS.

BY HENRY T. CHILD, M.D.

Of all the varied problems which have claimed the attention of mankind, life, while it has called forth the speculations of all classes of minds, from the most profound and elaborate to the most visionary and fanciful, ever has been and still remains one of the most intricate and deeply interesting. The various terms, *vis vite*, *vis medicatrix nature*, *vital force*, etc., are in reality but so many expressions of "learned ignorance." But we do not wish to be severe in our criticisms; the design of the following articles is to present facts as exhibited in nature, and free and candid suggestions, which, if they commend themselves to the reason and intelligence of the age, will be received, and if not, we are thankful no dogmatism will compel an acceptance of them. The panorama of life, in its infinitely diversified and varied forms, is a grand and mighty lever in the hands of the Infinite Father for raising matter to a higher and more refined plane. The Divine Power is here putting millions of arms under matter and saying in unmistakeable language, "come up higher." It is God speaking, as well in the lowliest flower—in the worm that crawls upon the earth—in the huge animals that roam o'er land or sea—as in man that walks erect, the compendium of all below and before him, enstamped more fully with the image of the Divine.

Life is the highest, the noblest, the most beautiful expression of God to man. Here He invites us to come and talk with him in all these wonders outspread with so much lavish beauty. In all the innumerable forms of life He is ever saying to man, "come and let us reason together."

Matter may be classed under three forms. First.—That which is gross and palpable—perceptible to the senses—ponderable matter—having weight and form. There are many individuals who are so organized that they consider this, if not the only form of matter, the chief and most important.

Secondly.—We have imponderable matter divided by the schools into heat, light, electricity, magnetism, etc. This form of matter is usually considered to be perceptible only by its effects.

Thirdly.—We have what I shall term spiritual matter, which is invisible, intangible, and imponderable, and never has been perceived by the senses.

If we examine these forms of matter, beginning with the first, we shall find that it contains more or less of the other two, but it is not probable that spirit matter contains any of the others.

The question of the eternity of matter is to our mind very simple, believing that whatever has had a beginning must have an end. From the fact that the Divine Principle—the central sun of the universe—is without beginning or end, and that such a Principle could never have existed without matter, the inference is logical that matter has been from eternity, that it never had a beginning and can never have an end. Though as finite beings we cannot fully comprehend this proposition, yet we feel that it is true. Creation means only a rearrangement of matter in new forms and combinations for

varied purposes. The proposition of the theologian, that matter was made out of nothing, is simply absurd.

The first form of matter has been subject to the observation of mankind in all ages, although unnumbered millions of human beings have walked the earth with scarcely a single idea of the character of the material on which they trod, much less of that which entered their physical organisms and made them part of that earth. Only in comparatively modern times has man pushed his investigations into this field, and the chemist and geologist of to-day are but studying the rudiments which lie on the threshold of this magnificent temple. The field is exhaustless; the researches of the last century, rich and varied as they are, have only opened to us a wider domain—a more comprehensive field in which the skill, the talents and the energy of the most expanded intellect, will find ample room to revel amid the magnificent truths that are hidden and revealed in the wondrous mysteries of the material universe.

The external form of matter is evidently an outgrowth, a result, a coming together of matter governed by an interior principle which must be allied to spirit matter. It has the capacity of being made invisible and imponderable by the application of a certain amount of heat which changes most bodies, first, into a fluid condition, then a gaseous, then an ether, more refined, and lastly, an imperceptible condition, which has been called impersonal; and if the grossest form of matter can thus escape our cognizance, by reversing the process it may be brought back to a condition similar to its original.

Natural philosophers have discovered that this form of matter consists of sixty-four primates, each of which is believed to be an elementary or simple substance, and we shall admit this to be so for the present.

It is this form of matter, in these and other primates, in various combinations, that constitutes the globes that form the stellar and astral systems that make up the Universe. But it is of our solar system, and especially of our earth, that we all speak. There was a time in the history of the material elements which compose this system, when they were in a liquid mass, in a state of combustion, occupying a space extending beyond that now circumscribed by the orbit of the planet most distant from the central sun. What is combustion? A condition of matter in which the particles are so far separated as to weaken their attraction, and allow of very considerable freedom of motion and play of affinities among them. What are affinities? They are certain attractive conditions that exist throughout the realms of matter and of mind.

Experience proves that the law of affinity is fundamental and universal, without which neither union nor combination could exist. We speak of certain forces as positive and negative: these terms invariably imply, and the forces produce, attraction. The relation of certain primates and compounds to each other is such that they are constantly and undeviatingly impelled in a direction to unite and form compounds; though conditions may prevent this for a time, yet the impulse remains as an inherent property of matter.

Where the forces are similar, as two positives or two negatives, they invariably produce repulsion, which is a condition directly the reverse of the former one, in which the particles are driven from each other, and cannot form a union or compound.

These forces of positive and negative power—attraction and repulsion—are more strikingly manifested in the domain of the imponderables, and in the sphere of mental and spiritual action, but it must be confessed that, in the language of a modern writer, "we are sufficiently ignorant" of this law, and our knowledge of it is confined to a limited number of its effects.

This law, like everything in the universe, is adapted to the purpose for which it was designed. The positive and negative forces of the mineral kingdom are as much more gross than those which operate in the realm of mind or spirit as is the mineral itself more gross and unrefined than mind or spirit; hence the positive and negative forces of the external material world, when they act on the mental or spiritual sphere, are discordant and inharmonious in their effects.

Let us endeavour to carry our thoughts back, not thousands of years, but millions of ages, to the period when our solar system was a liquid mass in a state of combustion. The same elements and particles of matter, which are now marshalled around us in majestic continents and islands, in oceans and rivers, in the infinitely varied forms of inanimate matter, as well as in the multitudinous forms of living beauty that are basking in the sunshine of a joyous existence, were then rushing hither and thither in confusion, apparently without law, but in reality under the same great law of positive and negative forces.

The first perceptible change in such a liquid mass, thus violently agitated and convulsed, would be the condensation of certain portions; the particles coming together, and finding their appropriate associates, repose in nearer proximity.

It is a general rule that solids are positive to fluids.

Thus the earth retains the ocean within its bounds, and fluids are with few exceptions, held in solids.

This partially consolidated mass, assuming gradually a more positive character, would, in time, become equally positive with the whole mass of fluid in which it was immersed, and two positives by the law already referred to would repel each other, and thus the first planet, the outermost of the system, was born of its parent, and sent forth to walk alone in its beautiful orbit forever—the first-born of our sun sent out into the star-gemmed vault amid the orbs;

"Forever singing, as they shine.
The hand that made us is divine."

The same causes continued to operate in the central mass, and in succeeding cycles new planets were born and sent forth, each one leaving the central mass more concentrated, and from its diminished size unable to send out its children so far as those which had gone before, from their mother sun. Thus was our earth, in common with the other planets, projected into space. In order that the motion of the planets on their axes, and the form they assume, may be understood, we must here refer to certain phenomena in relation to electric and magnetic currents which have been recently discovered. In every atom, as well as in every world, and in all the intermediates between the atom and the world, there are two currents, a radiating and a circular, or revolving current. And if the atom or the world be so far removed from the influence of surrounding atoms or worlds as to allow these currents to operate positively, they will manifest themselves.

The radiating currents flow out in right lines as radii from a centre. These lines which are electroid, or similar to electricity, have been described by Baron Reichenbach in his *Dynamics*. He found that certain persons, whom he calls "sick sensitives," but whom we call impressible, perceived, when in the dark, lines of light emanating from various bodies in radii; these were most conspicuous when magnets were employed, and most persons can perceive these emanations from bodies which are overcharged with electricity, and placed in the dark. Substances in which chemical decomposition was going on actively, presented these phenomena strikingly, hence the "will o' the wisp"—and the appearance of lights over graves, were accounted for.

In extremely sensitive persons these appearances could be perceived more or less distinctly as emanating from all bodies. This aura, which thus emanates from all substances, necessarily partakes of the character of the body from whence it emanates; that of the mineral being the most gross, was the first to be perceived; other and finer emanations required finer and more delicate tests of their presence.

It is a very significant fact that the saints and martyrs of all ages have been very generally painted with a magnificent halo radiating from their brains, the brain being the culminating point of matter—the most beautiful and refined structure to be found in the material universe. And if the two extremes—the most refined and subtile, and the most gross and ponderable forms of external matter—exhibit this phenomena, may we not reasonably infer that all that lies in the broad plain intermediate between these will be subject to similar influences.

The observations and experiments of Baron Reichenbach were confined to a limited scale and applied to small objects, but they beautifully confirm the statement we have made, that the world, as well as every atom which constitutes it, is attended with and influenced by these phenomena of radiating currents.

We know the existence of these facts has been questioned and ridiculed by a class of scientific men, but they are so perfectly natural and appropriate that we accept them.

The development of the nervous system, and especially of the great sympathetic system of nerves, is daily rendering mankind more and more susceptible to influences which, under other circumstances, they could have no more perception of, than the blind could have of light.

The influence of these electroid currents opens a new and interesting field to us. The explanation of many of the most intricate and important phenomena of life, of health, of development, of accumulation on different parts of the globe, of the migration of animals, &c., are involved in this, and we shall hereafter devote a chapter especially to it.

The circular currents, though not so clearly manifest as those of which we have been speaking, have been discovered, and their effects are so patent that their existence cannot longer remain a question; they revolve as a belt, having their greatest force concentrated in the equatorial regions, and gradually diminishing as they approach the poles. The magnetic needle stands at right angles to their currents. Their motion in our globe is in a direction from east to west, and the reaction which they produce causes the earth to revolve on its axis, in a direction from west to east, with a uniform velocity.

That such a motion would be thus produced is daily illustrated, by the movement of a steam propeller through the water, the current of which being thrown back propels the vessel forward. It is also shown by the movements of the Electrical Orrery in which the currents passing out into the atmosphere impel the machine to revolve in an opposite direction.

When any mass is separated from its parent, and thrown out into space so far as to be partially free from the positive and controlling influence of that parent, these currents produce a rotary motion, which, acting on the mass in a semi-fluid condition, must produce expansion by centrifugal force at the equator, and consequently flattening at the poles.

The laws of affinity, which have been so actively engaged, are still arranging the particles and forming the solid crust of the earth. This is the igneous strata—the primitive rocks consisting of the granites, greenstone, porphyry, and the various lavas formed, containing within and upon them all the primates of the globe.

In this condition, with numerous volcanoes belching forth their volumes of liquid fire and clouds of dense sulphurous smoke, and convulsed by fearful earthquakes, our common mother went whirling through space. No pools of water or cooling streams were there, but all was arid and desolate. There was neither life nor anything that sustains it. Mountains rose up suddenly, valleys were spread out, the earth's crust was broken, and lava and smoke issued from the fissures, and fragments were thrown about in confusion, and exposed to the action of the elements around them. The law of affinity, ever yielding to higher influences, was operating upon the rocks. The granites, which are composed of quartz, mica and felspar, and quartz, mica and hornblende, in the slow moldering decay of ages, were decomposed, the quartz being disintegrated, formed the sand, the mica being friable, crumbled into small masses, the felspar, by a partial decomposition, furnishes alumina, potassa and other ingredients in clay; these three form the basis of most of the soil of earth.

The surface in process of time became sufficiently cooled to allow waters to be condensed and collected in pools and aid in producing changes on the earth. By the eruption of internal fires, these pools were frequently converted into seething cauldrons; at other times red-hot masses were thrown into the waters, and by a sudden change of temperature, splintered into fragments.

Thus, new affinities, under slower and more favorable circumstances, took place; particles selected their associates with a nicer discrimination and precision, and the resulting compounds were of a better type. The first affinities were characterized more by strength than by refinement, each succeeding step was toward a better union, more of the primates entered into combination, and the mineral kingdom ascended to a plane fitted for the introduction of other and higher forms in which the life principle is manifested.

Having thus briefly turned over the preface and contents of the great volume of Nature, and read the first chapter, in which the birth of the world is chronicled, we will now leave it. In our next we shall be ready to turn over the leaves of another chapter, the pages of which are illustrated with the beautiful pictures of vegetable and animal life.

THE CHURCHES VERSUS MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

The following impartial article in reference to the present status of Spiritualism, appeared in the *New York Herald* and was republished in the *Melbourne Herald* of December 19th.—

Catholicism and modern Spiritualism form the zenith and nadir of the religious world of Europe and America, Protestantism, with all its sects, ranges between these. Catholicism is governed by fixed principles, emanating from a so styled infallible head. The measure of Protestantism cannot be taken for it varies in every one of its very numerous divisions. It is, as its name implies, a negative religion. The present gaseous state of modern Spiritualism also repels close examination, but it seems evidently destined to present to the world the antipode of Catholicism, by asserting for mankind, in matters social and religious, a claim to the very wildest kind of freedom. In the battle which must occur sooner or later between these faiths there are only two positions capable of being logically defended. They are absolute authority on the one side, unrestrained liberty or license on the other. There is no middle point capable of being maintained in this encounter. Catholicism declares for the former of these positions, modern Spiritualism into the latter. In spite of the present wealth, power and prestige of the Protestant churches, it is believed that eventually disintegration will compel them to range their forces for the encounter under one or the other of the above-mentioned principles.

CATHOLIC SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

Catholicism is the true foe of modern Spiritualism. Both of them assume to receive direct aid from the spirit world. Antagonistic and uncompromising on all other points, they appear to meet on the plane of spiritual manifestations. What is still more singular, these manifestations seem to increase in the Catholic Church, in numbers and magnitude of proportion sufficient to neutralise the effects of those of its more modern opponents. Thus in California we have an attested case of the appearance of the "stigmata" on the person of a maiden; of the repeated ministrations of the spirit of a daughter to her father in Colorado: while, in Europe, all France is on its knees before the marvellous cures that have been wrought in thousands of instances by Our Lady of Lourdes.

ANTITHESIS BETWEEN CATHOLICISM AND MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

But it is only on the plane of the spiritually marvellous that these two adversaries condescend to meet. On all others they are wide as the poles apart. To the Catholic, modern Spiritualism is the fitting termination of the right of private judgment established by protestantism. To him Episcopalianism is the root out of which have grown the multifarious branches of Presbyterianism, Methodism, &c., terminating with Oneida Communism, Mormonism, and modern Spiritualism. He recognises in the latter the natural chaos into which things lapse when the governing principle has been withdrawn. The modern Spiritualist, on the contrary, perceives in the Catholic his firm and

unyielding foe. He condemns the latter as inimical to progress, and consequently detrimental to humanity; he scorns the inflexibility of his creed, which the modern Spiritualist asserts has been four times amended, if not altered, before it received the name of Catholicism, viz.:—In the time of Seth, in the time of Noah, in the time of Moses, and in the time of Christ. The Modern Spiritualist meets the Catholic's individuality with collectivism, his immaterialism with democracy and his strict monogamy with the unlicensed freedom of the affections. It is true that, in the spiritual field, both claim to use immaterial weapons; but the Catholic declares that his arms were fashioned in heaven, and condemns his adversaries as having been tempered in hell. To conclude the paragraph—Catholicism is the oldest religious corporation that the world has ever known, while modern Spiritualism, cheerfully recognises all creeds, even that of its opponent, the Catholic, as important parts of its own development.

MODERN SPIRITUALISM AND THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES.

It is easy to perceive the effect that modern Spiritualism will produce upon the Protestant churches. They are the main sources from whence it draws its recruits. Its success in them is in proportion to the so-called liberalism that they possess. The conservative elements in them will and do incline to Catholicism, but the radical elements will naturally fall a prey to modern Spiritualism. Already staid Episcopalianism appears to be sundering; every day the barrier is rising higher and higher which must eventually cause a division in its membership. From the High Church to Catholicism is but a step that many (very many) of its communicants have logically taken. The Presbyterians and Baptists will naturally gravitate towards the law and order party also. The Dutch Reformers, and especially the Methodists and Independents, it is claimed, are now more or less inoculated with the virus of modern Spiritualism, and have suffered in consequence; and the Universalists and Unitarians are its proper prey. Modern Spiritualists already boast that these latter faiths are already undermined, and that their clergy are more infected than their peoples.

PROTESTANT CLERICAL COQUETRY WITH MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

The reason why the defection should prove more general on the part of the clergy of these last mentioned churches is obvious. Notwithstanding the premise contained in St. Mark xvi., 17, 18, which, without limitation by time, invested all believers with supernatural gifts, Protestant churches are generally apt to deny that miraculous powers are delegated to any body of men at present existing. Added to this the spirit of inquiry is stimulated on the part of the Protestant clergy by the desire for victory over modern Spiritualism, and is rarely repressed (by authority) in any way or manner whatever. Sometimes examination into spiritual phenomena leads to conviction, as in the late case of the Rev. Mr. Watson, of the Methodist Church; and it may be said to affect, more or less, all other ministers who follow it steadily. Sometimes those who do not become outspoken converts become really auxiliaries to the spreading of modern Spiritualism without so intending. They are apt to relate their experiences to their flocks, and the flocks follow their pastors. "The Rev. Mr. —, our minister, attends seances, why should not I? It has not injured him nor shaken his faith, why should it hurt me, or overthrow mine? This is sound argument, but sometimes experience invalidates its conclusions.

PROTESTANTISM VERSUS MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

According to the published statements of modern Spiritualists, the Protestant churches are half filled with believers in special spiritual communications. Against such communications the Protestant churches have no defence, except that of a denial of their truthfulness. Rebutting this disclaimer, modern Spiritualists present hosts of statements from the Bible itself recording similar experiences, and justifying belief in the same, one of which has been already quoted. It is true there are some ministers who admit that there are super-

natural powers exhibited in the manifestations, but ascribe such powers to evil agencies alone. These would treat all the unfortunate mediums as Cotton Mather treated the witches; but it is somewhat too late in the day for such proceedings. Many fall back on their dignity, and assert all such exhibitions to be mere jugglery. Well, modern Spiritualists themselves admit that many knaveries are practised by mediums. Andrew Jackson Davis, the apostle of the movement, asserted that he believed that eighty per cent of the manifestations were manufactured. It is natural that there should be some knavery occasionally exhibited. People who pay 5 dol. for a seance require something for their money. If the spirits will not appear in *propria persona*, they are sometimes "simulated," as in the late case of the medium, Mr. Gordon. But whether the exhibitions be fraudulent or genuine, or both, it is evident that the Protestant churches have formed, as yet, no settled plan on which to combine to stop the spreading of modern Spiritualism.

CATHOLICISM VERSUS MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

The action of the Catholic Church with regard to modern Spiritualism comes next in order. Unlike Protestantism it both admits and sanctions the use of miracles performed by spiritual agencies within its pale. The marvellous is as well recognised by it as it was by the Disciples in the time of Christ. It does not deny but that spiritual manifestations may and do occur independent of its operations; but all such manifestations are condemned by it, as contraband articles are condemned by regular Custom House officials. They are illegitimate productions, and consequently must not be witnessed by good Catholics. Its communicants cannot, therefore, be converted to modern Spiritualism without their first breaking the rules of their Church, which forbid attendance on all unsanctioned exhibitions of a spiritual nature. It is by these means the Catholic Church guards its people from the infection of modern Spiritualism.

CONCLUSION.

In terminating this paper on modern Spiritualism it is well to glance at its present position in order to show the necessity that exists for bringing it before the notice of the people. Probably no faith that the world has ever known has extended so widely in so short a space of time as modern Spiritualism. About twenty-five years ago it was commenced in a cottage at Rochester, N.Y. Now its unearthly drum beats are to be heard in every civilised nation, and in the city of New York its table tippings and turnings have been more or less practised in very many houses. Beside this, it has in the United States two regular monthly magazines, four accredited weekly newspapers, and about a score of irregular presses, which tamper with it. In Great Britain it has three monthlies and about four weekly papers. Added to these it is well represented by presses in Germany, France, Denmark, Spain, Russia, Italy, and Mexico, and has its own organs in Australia and British India. It has lately held here two important meetings—one in Vineland, N.J., which was reported in the New York Herald, and one since at Silver Lake Grove, Mass., at which it was estimated 8000 people were encamped for nearly a fortnight—the estimates of the Boston papers, on special days, running as high as 18,000. On the 16th inst., it proposes to commence holding a Convention at Chicago, to continue in session some days. These statements tend to show that modern Spiritualism is becoming a power in the land, justify the attention that has been given to it here, and prove that the record of its doings is not unworthy of the serious attention of the American public.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

SUBSCRIBERS who receive their papers in a colored wrapper will understand that their subscriptions are overdue, and will oblige by forwarding the same at an early date.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?*

THIS is the title of one of the most useful handbooks of Spiritualism, containing in a small compass a large amount of information, evidences, and terse arguments in support of the positions assumed. The first chapter treats upon the general uncertainty regarding the future state, and the fear of death engendered thereby, the materialistic tendencies of the most advanced thinkers, the inconsistencies of the orthodox belief regarding the future state, and the value of Spiritualism in throwing light on this important subject. Chapter two, points out the erroneous notions regarding Spiritualism, and the unreasonable prejudice created thereby. The third and fourth chapters are principally historical, giving an account of the origin and progress of the movement in America and England, the *modus operandi* of spirits, evidence of Mr. C. F. Varley, C.E., F.R.S., before the Dialectical Society, his reasons for believing in Spiritualism, &c. Chapter V. gives an explanation of various kinds of mediumship, with well attested illustrations, and discusses the philosophy of the subject. Chapter VI. is principally devoted to direct spirit writing and spirit photography, and includes some very strong evidence of the fact of the latter phenomena. Chapter VII. is on trance mediumship, as explained by and through Mr. Morse, of London, with specimens of discourses received through that medium, professedly from the spirit of a Chinese philosopher named "Tien-sien-ti." Chapter VIII. is a review of A. J. Davis's "Principles of Nature," giving an account of the extraordinary circumstances of its reception, and short extracts illustrative of its content.

Chapter IX.—Further illustrations of trance mediumship, and pictures of the future state as revealed thereby, the causes of untruthful messages, spirit poetry, with extracts.

Chapters X. and XI. are on spirit painting and trance mediumships, giving accounts of sittings with mediums of repute.

Chapter XII. answers general objections, and gives strong evidences of the utility of Spiritualism.

Chapter XIII. answers clerical objections, and explains the cause of contradictory communications; also gives valuable advice upon mediums and mediumship. The last chapter summarises the principles of modern Spiritualism, shows the necessity for a new revelation, and in answer to the question "*Cui Bono?*" gives among other quotations the following:—

"Professor Mapes, LL.D., an eminent American scientific man—recently deceased—of whom the American papers spoke in the most eulogistic terms in alluding to his great genius and high literary and scientific attainments, and who was a permanent member of the New York Lyceum, honorary member of the Scientific Institute of Brussels, the Royal Society of St. Petersburg, and the Geographical Society of Paris, thus speaks of the utility of Spiritualism:—

"Spirits have in a vast number of well-attested instances proved their will and ability to ward off dangers, cure sickness, prevent crimes, reform criminals, restore lost property, and communicate many useful, scientific, and some highly occult and novel ideas to mankind. . . .

... Thousands of erring persons have been reformed by Spiritualism, and many a chilled heart that had almost ceased to beat in unison with its fellows, has been warmed into human sympathy by communications from loved ones, long since passed from the form. . . .

... Nothing has been so effective in reclaiming the vicious, and rendering the family circle a perfect school-house for Christian feeling. It has been the means of educating many a wayward and inconstant heart into prayerful feeling, gentleness towards the creature, and reverend aspiration to the Creator."

And after some pithy remarks from the "New Orleans Times," concludes by giving a long list of English standard works on the subject of Spiritualism. We would thoroughly recommend this book to those who wish to get an insight into the subject, but are not yet sufficiently interested to enter into the investigation.

* Where are the Dead, or Spiritualism explained, by Fritz. A. Ireland & Co. Pal Mall, Manchester.

BURNING THE DEAD.

Dr. Neild, at the December Meeting of the Royal Society, read a very lucid paper on the subject of cremation, or the burning instead of burial of the dead bodies. The Doctor's experience of some years past, as assistant to Coroner Youl, enables him to write authoritatively on some phases of his subject; and he testifies to the loathsome changes of decomposition, which inevitably ensue "whether the body be above ground, in the earth, or under the water." As the process goes on, whether swiftly or slowly, gases are liberated and discharged into the atmosphere, which are highly deleterious to health, poisonous to the blood, and offensive to the senses. There can be no doubt that, as Dr. Neild says, "the atmosphere must of necessity be polluted by the gases arising through the earth out of the graves of thousands of bodies which are annually interred in this large city." As we know that sulphuretted and phosphuretted hydrogen gases are very active poisons even in a diluted form, it is easy to conclude that, though they may not kill outright when taken into the system in small doses, yet that their influence, when breathed continuously during an extended period, must be injurious. Besides, a large portion of volatilized matter must be dispersed through the atmosphere during the process, notwithstanding the weight of superincumbent earth. Mr. Walker, a London surgeon, published forty years ago a curious book, entitled "Gatherings from Graveyards," in which he showed conclusively that from the surface of the ground above dead bodies there was continually arising a miasma possessing poisonous qualities. Dr. Neild thinks that, "considering the subtle and mysterious properties of disease germs, it is likely that many cases of disease, in which the agencies of causation are obscure, derive their origin from infectious particles thus volatilized." He, therefore, proposes, in lieu of burial, the burning of the bodies, a rapid process, which does not offend the senses, pollute the atmosphere, nor endanger the health of the living. Prof. Pali, of Milan, has lately been strongly advocating the adoption of this process, and in England its desirability has been discussed with emphatic approval by several leading social reformers.

It gives us pleasure to see this subject of cremation revived among us, and to observe that a number of gentlemen, in the Royal Society Meeting in speaking upon it, were quite in accord with Dr. Neild's essay. It has almost all rational arguments in its favor. A certain sentimental superstition still clings tenaciously to the custom of burial of the dead, and struggles against the increasing enlightenment of the age; but should scientific men give it their serious attention, the thin veil of mystic sanctity may in time be removed, and the minds of the rising generation be liberated from the thralldom of an unmeaning prejudice. Probably among the many ceremonies which the influence of priestcraft in all past times has succeeded in fostering—as tending to magnify the importance of its office—there is none with so much against it, and so little in its favor, as the custom of costly funerals and pompous rites in connection with the interment of the human corpse. To what influence are we to attribute the retention of these ceremonies in the Christian church? Doubtless to the early and since widely diffused error of the resurrection of the body. That the resurrection taught in the Christian Scriptures is a material one, was believed by some even in the apostolic age, though Paul took pains to set the subject in its true light in one of his letters to the Corinthians. This error became general as that religious organization corrupted itself, and degenerated into a vast establishment of proxy worship, with vicarious atonement as its sheet anchor. In its declension from the simplicity inaugurated by the fishermen of Galilee, the church has, by the craft of priests, successfully striven to obtain the upper hand, and by magical rites to keep the laity in bondage. Among their potent spells is the assumption of peculiar privileges and almost unlimited authority in spiritual matters.

The medicine man of the Indian or African tribes only succeeds in maintaining his power over his ignorant fellow heathen by a great show of mystery, and a pretence of influence with the genius of health or the demon of sickness—to propitiate the one, and to intimidate the other. And how like this are the fetish ceremonies of some nearer home over the last remains of poor old mortality? Many are the assumed occasions for the exercise by the clergy of their special gifts. The pure and innocent babe, on its entrance into life, must be manipulated by the priest, or there is no telling what would become of it: Some go so far as to say its soul would be in peril! The espousals of two persons of opposite sex, who have determined to live with and for each other through life, cannot be properly conducted without the intervention of a priest, and is all the better for a bishop or two! And when—last scene of all—the cast-off body is to be disposed of, the black-robed priest once more thrusts himself into the sacred presence, and declares the holy rites of the church necessary to the peaceful repose of the departed ghost. And not to rest within consecrated ground, is to subject the body to some malific influence or danger—*what*, it would, perhaps, be difficult to say. The palpitating heart of a frightened reprobate must be soothed into a false security, by the promise of the priestly influence with an offended and angry God, and the shrinking soul marshalled through the dark valley with a vain promise of absolution,—so must a grand pow-wow be held, captained by a priest, to lay the worn out body in its place out of sight, or there could be no such thing as quietness for it! Nor is Ecclesiasticism content with seeing the last of a man on earth. To maintain its ascendancy over the minds of those who are left behind, and to be enabled to still drain money from them, now that their dead relative is beyond clerical grasp, a fine scheme was invented centuries ago, by which it was assumed that by priestly intervention the progress of the departed soul was facilitated through the dismal regions of Purgatory. The man in the Moon would be incredulous when informed that this transparent trick was still in vogue in the midst of the boasted enlightenment of the Nineteenth century.

Now, what rational mind cannot see that these all partake of the same superstitious character—have all, as it were, the mark of the Beast upon them, the love of domination?

Pompous displays at funerals originate in worldliness, and have been wedded by the priests to sacramentalism for their own ends. The weak and superstitious shrink from dispensing with the religious formalities, for fear of all imaginable perils hereafter; and they expend unwarrantable sums upon a lengthy cortege and costly fittings, for fear of what Mrs Grundy may say. When the Reformers arose, we might have anticipated that some improvement would have been made in this respect; but the old superstitions of Mother Church still influenced them. Besides, they were careful not to dispense with so fruitful a source of influence—for the love of rule soon became the ruling love with them, as it was with the old stock from which they sprang. So, they, too, have fostered the idea of bodily sanctity and priestly ceremony. Taught thus, century after century, what wonder that we find it difficult to throw off the superstition, even at the dictate of Reason, Revelation, and Science? Like the shirt of Nessus, it clings to us. Reason tells us that it is wanton waste, often criminal in degree, to expend large sums upon the interment of our dead. Revelation teaches us that what we call death is merely transition, and that the spirit form which once dwelt in a material tabernacle,

"Sings now an everlasting song
Amidst the trees of Life!"

And Science points out the likelihood that the great plagues and pestilences of the earth owe their origin to the deleterious gases emanating from the dead bodies stored for many years in the large cemeteries of cities. Shall we, then, continue to be led by our superstitions?—for we of this generation are all more or less influenced by them—or shall we rise superior to the materialistic traditions of our fathers and their clerical teachers?

THE LYCEUM.

The Melbourne Progressive Lyceum is making steady progress, and attracts a considerable amount of attention among the outside public, the gallery and visitors' seats being always well filled. The average attendance of children for the month of November, was 82. Mr. Veevers has given several short lectures on Natural History, illustrated by some well executed drawings and paintings which were particularly interesting to the young folks. We append a few of the answers to questions by members of the Lyceum.

"What are the objects of the Lyceum?"

In suggesting "the Objects of our Lyceum" as a subject for "a definition," I am "impressed" to think the object of "a definition" to have been lost sight of, namely: *short, distinct, definite, "small-change,"* for words and subjects, about which there are more opinions than one, the more generally received of which opinions are *self-evidently* erroneous and absurd.

Now in any such limited compass as that, I find it utterly impossible to compress even my limited ideas on such a subject. I therefore, now limit myself to the objects for which I as an individual youthful member, most value and esteem, the Lyceum.

First, as a change from Sunday school teachings in relation to which, we most highly value the new exercise of finding *true* definitions of those words and subjects which were *there* fast leading us astray, and I like them more particularly still, because they afford subjects for us to talk about at home with our parents, who never much talked with us on such subjects before, and they appear to *warm up*, and feel pleased with the exercise too, so that we practically find it acting as a little domestic "*leaven*," "*leavening*" the whole lot of us.

For another reason, I also value the Lyceum, even more highly still, namely: as affording us an opportunity of learning, better than our cold English class feelings toward each other did, by bringing us together that we may become mutually acquainted, and learn to *evince* the large amount of good nature, and kind social feelings we are each and all endowed with by our Divine Creator, and which, in our little minds we really *feel* to possess, and know to be lying dormant there, in all of us, only for want of something like an honest, self-denying, friendly effort, by "all hands," in a sunny sympathetic atmosphere like this, to invite to the surface; and burst out in full vigor, both "blessing him that gives, and him that takes."

May the shadows of our leaders never grow less—good morning.

2nd. The main object of this Lyceum is to bring us together to encourage and develop our higher and better feelings toward each other in word *act* as progressive beings—to impress us with the fact of our *necessity* to each other, both *physically* and *intellectually*—*physically*, for the supply of every want we allow our appetites, and conventionalism, to impose upon us; and, *intellectually*, for that sweet sympathy and esteem, without which we are as truly isolated as an Alexander Selkirk on his desert island.

What is Pride?

A self-conceived idea of superiority to others, where none exists:—and which effectually insures the pity and contempt of others, instead of their love and esteem.

An over estimate of our own abilities, arising from a neglect of self-examination.

"What is Thought?"

It is the power which every being endowed with perception and reason is conscious he possesses, of representing to himself sensible objects.

2nd. Thought is the mind in active reflection on any proposition proposed to or suggested by itself.

"What is Reason?"

Our magnetic compass, for guiding us in the voyage of life.

A. J. DAVIS.

We wrote last July to A. J. Davis, and the subject of Re-incarnation being then on the tapis, we enquired of our Elder brother, what his opinion of it was, thinking he might have had opportunities of investigation beyond our own. In a reply received by last mail, he says in reference to our query: "*Re-incarnation?* It may have occurred to you that of late years Spiritualists have become followers of "testimony," rather than of Nature, Intuition, and Reason. The testimony of different mediums and spirits, if followed, would in twenty years more, convert Spiritualists into the most discordant mass of superstitions. Mr. Peebles is a superior but faithful representative of the coming condition. You ask me, my friend, for testimony—thinking, possibly, some superior spirits might have instructed my mind. I trust the volumes published are sufficiently explicit. The principles of nature, as interpreted by Reason, *not* the opinions and testimony of any person anywhere, are therein referred to constantly. If they do not teach you, I cannot aid by any word. Spiritualists are now as easily prejudiced against each other as children. When they arrive to manhood in thought and growth, they will put aside their present foolish theories and among them will pass away, 'Free Love' 'What is, is Right' 'Everybody a Medium' 'Reincarnation, &c., &c.' Pardon my haste Brother, for I am my own clerk. Let me hear from you again.

Fraternally,

A. J. DAVIS.

WAITING AT THE GATES.

THE utility of spirit communion has frequently been questioned, and, strangest of all, most frequently by Christians. "What good, after all," say they, "is to be accomplished by this table-tipping and planchette writing, even admitting that it be true—that it really is from disembodied spirits the communications come?"

We might well answer with the counter-question—Is it, indeed, nothing to feel "the touch of a vanished hand" and to hear "the sound of a voice that is still?" Or again, granting that there are some so incredulous as not to believe though one rose from the dead, still it does not follow that this is true of all. There are many like Thomas, in this day of inquiry and enlightenment. Many who require to see and feel for themselves before they *can* believe. To all such the fast accumulating evidences of Spiritualism bring a blessed certainty which can be fully appreciated only by those who have felt the need of it. The mother has her departed little one brought to her; friend converses with friend, father with son, brother with brother. And from hoping or believing we come to knowing that the cold earth does not clasp the beloved one, and that the pulseless form laid away in the horrible pit is not our darling. But in no way is Spiritualism more beautiful or more useful than as a preparation for the world to come—to none is it a greater comfort than to those whose ebbing life tells plainly that the turn of any tide may land them on the other shore.

We know an aged man, whose body has many infirmities, and whose life has many trials. He has in his life journey come to the very outposts of earth, up to the very gates of the great change that must sooner or later take place with us all. He is awaiting it in no tranquil haven; the storms of life still beat rudely around him. But they cannot disturb the placid calm in which his spirit dwells, they cannot blast the peace he has attained to. Every daily duty is as punctually performed as health permits; but his hopes, his anticipations, his thoughts are fixed beyond the opening gates through which the radiance of the summer-land is already streaming on him.

Almost daily his friends who have passed there before him send him messages of love and counsel. They tell him how they are waiting for him, how they are preparing for him; that it does not matter where or among whom his eyes may close in death, for they shall open at once among those who have known and loved him these

many years, that his home among them is nearly ready for him, and that the last inevitable struggle shall be painless and unconscious.

How wonderful it is to hear him under these circumstances, in his simple and unimpassioned way, of the letters, for such they really are, that he receives from his friends on the thither side of the grave! How complete an answer he is to the *cui bono* question!

The great fact of spirit-communion is to the Christians a stumbling block and to the scientists foolishness; but to the aching human heart and weary human spirit it is the balm of Gilead giving assurance of a happy entrance into a living and real world—not into a dead one.

A SEANCE WITH THE REV. F. W. MONCK, LL.D., F.A.S.

From the "*Medium*."

On Monday evening, 15th September, a seance was held at 7, Unity-street, College Green, Bristol, at which sixteen persons were present, including the medium, the Rev. F. W. Monck, F.A.S. The hands of the medium were held by those on each side of him, and the rest of the sitters having joined hands round a large square table, without castors, the manifestations shortly commenced. Several loud notes were first produced by an accordion which had been securely tied by stout cord, so that it was impossible to open it, or inflate the bellows in the slightest degree. Mr. Monck shortly passed into the trance, and was possessed by the spirit of his friend "Samuel;" he then took the accordion round to each of the sitters in succession, and placing each person's hand on it, to convince him or her that the string was still tightly bound round it, he raised it to the ear of the sitter, and in each instance the instrument gave forth loud musical notes, sometimes long continued. On procuring a light it was found that the accordion was still tightly secured by the cord, and that it had in no way been tampered with. One of the ladies, who was present at a seance for the first time, felt her dress strongly pulled while all hands were joined on the table, and the person who sat next to her received at the same time a blow on the foot. Noises were now heard from the upper part of the room; the table was rapidly moved about half a yard from its position, and lifted several inches from the floor. Movements and oscillations of the table occurred several times during the evening; articles on the table were violently moved, and a saucer was broken in two while all hands were joined. Spirit-lights were visible in the room; one spirit, the mother of a gentleman present, was recognised, and at his request, he was distinctly touched by her on the head. These touches occurred just at the moment when the medium, who was still entranced, and at a considerable distance from the gentleman, saw and described the movements of the spirit, exactly corresponding to the effects produced and felt. A half-sheet of note-paper was shown round to all the company, and found to be perfectly blank on both sides; a corner was then torn off and placed in the hand of one of the sitters; the medium then, in the trance, and with his face covered, commenced to write. In four seconds—timed by one of the company—one side of the paper was closely filled in a small distinct handwriting, and also written across. On being handed round it was found that the corner torn off fitted exactly to the torn portion of the paper. At one time several of the company felt drops falling on their hands, and immediately a delicious perfume was exhaled from the moisture; this was repeated, and a different perfume then arose. The phenomenon of levitation next occurred in the person of the medium; three of the gentlemen present were successively called from their seats, and, after ascertaining that no chairs or other articles of furniture were near the medium, by means of which his elevation might have been assisted, they each, in succession, felt him descending from the ceiling, which is 10 feet 10 inches in height. One striking feature in this occurrence was the apparent diminution of the specific gravity of the medium, his

weight during his descent appearing to be less than half of a full-grown person.

During the evening a spirit, very different in manner and expression from "Samuel," took possession of the medium, and proceeded to deliver a discourse, exhorting all present to lead a good and holy life, and to avoid certain failings which had characterised a portion of his earth-life, and some of which he attributed to influences and tendencies inherited from his parents.

Several other strange and interesting manifestations occurred during the evening, the details of which would occupy too much of your space; suffice it to say that all who enjoyed the privilege of being present were highly gratified by the extraordinary manifestations, and the complete success of the seance.

The spirits having been thanked for their kindly visit, a mutual good-night was wished all around, and thus a pleasant and profitable meeting was brought to a close shortly before midnight.

GEORGE TOMMY.

7, Unity-street, College Green, Bristol.

SPIRIT TELEGRAPHY.

The writer is able to vouch, from personal knowledge of the circumstances, for the accuracy of the following remarkable narrative. A lady whom we will call Mrs. B. resided, in the year 1865, at San Francisco, California. It had been her home for many years. She had previously lived in Boston and while there had been well acquainted with a young actor of the name of Wilks Booth. Since her residence in California, however, she had entirely lost sight of him, and even the memory of the old acquaintance had almost faded away in the absence of anything to keep it fresh before the mind. One evening this lady retired to rest in her usual good health, and fell into a tranquil sleep, from which she was, however, soon aroused in a disagreeable manner. She dreamt that she was seated in a private box of a particular theatre which she has never yet seen, but which she is sure she would recognize. Her face was directed towards the stage, when suddenly the door of the box opened behind her and Wilks Booth, the young actor whom she had not seen or thought of for so many years, rushed in, struck her a violent blow at the back of the head, behind the ear, and then sprang out of the front of the box on to the stage and disappeared behind the scenes. She awoke in actual pain from the severity of the blow and related the disagreeable occurrence to her husband who advised her to go to sleep again and dream something more agreeable. The first part of this advice she followed, the second was beyond her power. Again she was in the same theatre, again the door behind her was thrown open, the almost forgotten friend of other days rushed in and the whole scene was re-enacted. A second time she awoke in pain, so severe and so lasting that when she rose in the morning she was still suffering from the experiences of the night. She narrated at the breakfast table to her sons, who had all been well acquainted with Wilks Booth, the circumstances of her dream. Beyond the inconvenience she was suffering, however, nothing was thought of it until a few hours later the city was convulsed by the news, flashed across the continent by the electric telegraph, that President Lincoln had been assassinated on the previous evening as he sat in the box of a theatre at Washington by Wilks Booth, who had entered the box by the door behind Mr. Lincoln, had shot him in the back of the head, and had then escaped, before any one could stop him, by springing on to the stage from the front of the box and disappearing behind the scenes. We make no comment on the incident beyond assuring our readers of its authenticity. It would be in vain to search for a *why* and a *wherefore* and a *how* to all the remarkable occurrences that are taking place around us. Nevertheless a careful record of such occurrences may ultimately furnish data from which to ascertain the true laws of that which now seems mysterious and even anomalous.

SPIRITUALISTS' PICNIC.

THE Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists and the Spiritualistic Free-thought Propagandist Association united for a picnic on Christmas Day. The gathering was held in the Survey Paddock, Richmond, the site chosen being that usually occupied by the German "Turn Verein," some distance higher up the river than the ordinary picnic ground. This, not having been announced, led to some difficulty, numbers of persons being delayed in finding the locale. Arrived on the ground the various parties settled down in pleasant spots of their own selection, and appeared to do ample justice to the many good things displayed upon the turf. Swings and croquet were provided, and a large ring erected for dancing. Light drinks and refreshments were provided by Mr. Powell in a large marquee adjoining the dancing ring. Dancing was kept up until half-past seven, shortly after which the picnic was brought to a close, and the company gradually dispersed, all apparently well pleased with their days enjoyment.

IN RE JOHN PAGAN.

A few weeks ago the attention of the Melbourne public was ostentatiously drawn by the daily papers to what was considered proof positive of the failure of Spiritualism to make good its claims to possessing means of communication with the spirits of the departed. The addresses given through Mrs. Raynor in the trance state at Weber's Rooms, and purporting to come from John Pagan, of Rochdale, will doubtless still be fresh in the memory of all our readers. At the time they were delivered they attracted a large share of public attention from many who had hitherto kept aloof from Spiritualism as from some unclean thing, as well as from many who were already avowed Spiritualists. The Christian doctrines, so-called, professed to be taught through this medium, doubtless induced some to attend who would not be seen at the meetings of Progressive or Free-thinking Spiritualists. But we believe that far the greater portion of the interest that attached to these exhibitions of mediumships arose in the wide spread desire existing in almost every human heart to see, if but faintly, into that world beyond the grave whither we are all travelling, and in which most of us have some friends. The result was hardly as favorable to Spiritualism as it would have been, had the matter given through the medium been up to the average intelligence and culture of her auditors. It was below them, and therefore the lady made but few converts to Christian, or to any other kind of Spiritualism. Something was gained, however, in the admission of some of our bitterest opponents, that Mrs. Raynor was beyond doubt a medium, and as such was an instance of some of the "most remarkable phenomena of human consciousness." Exactly what is meant by a medium, if it does not mean one who serves as a means of communication between this world and the world of spirits, we cannot imagine. To the apprehension of our antagonists, however, quite a different aspect has been put on all that was then made manifest, by the simple fact that John Pagan, the supposed communicating spirit, has since been ascertained to be alive, in the flesh, in England. Really it does not alter the matter much. Mrs. Raynor's mediumship is as certain as ever it was, and worth as much as ever it was. Perhaps its value was over rated by some, at the time she was brought so much into notice; almost certainly it is now, by many, under rated. The true lesson to be learnt, is that just as no blind confidence could be placed in the name attached to the communication, so also no blind confidence should be given to any doctrine taught by this or by any other spirit.

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Printed by E. Furton & Co., at their Office, 106 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne; for the Proprietor, W. H. Terry, and published by him at 96 Russell Street, South, Melbourne.